



CHARIVARIA

OLD Eton and King's men, after smouldering through the years over Dr. Hugh Dalton's flagrant betrayal of his class, have read with mortification the serialization of his egobiography in the *Evening Standard*. After a few instalments headed "The Plot to Get Attlee Out," and "I Warn Churchill about Cripps," they realize that the shrewd doctor has been working on their side all the time.

Headline Guaranteed

FRESH marvels of cunning are performed weekly by "This is Your Life" in the desperate effort to get a celebrity



under the arc-lights in a completely unsuspecting state of mind, and the enjoyment of viewers is naturally keener in proportion with the shock and amazement expressed by the victim. Perfection is still to be attained. The home circle still hopes for the programme's finest hour, when Eamonn Andrews extends his welcoming hand to a guest who has just died of heart failure.

A Bloom Withers

LONDONERS have for some time noticed how the cold, austere façades of the city's business houses have been warmed and beautified with nature's choicest flowers; it has seemed, to the busy passer-by, an invitation to suppress his cynical feelings about our leaders of commerce, and admit the possibility that behind the cold, austere façade of the business man there beats a heart warm and beautiful with a love for the uncommercial simplicities of life. Can a man really foreclose on a mortgage

when the daffodils blow under his window? Surely the squeeze must be compassionately eased in certain deserving cases by a banker whose room dances with the glow of double anemones! It is to be hoped that anyone enjoying these fresh, green thoughts missed the other day's small ad. in *The Times*, by a florist claiming to have supplied nearly thirty thousand feet of window-boxes last year, "since more business men" than ever recognized the value of an "outstanding advertising service at modest cost."

Old Man's Old Woman

AN etiquette problem is reported to have cropped up in the Merchant Navy over how deckhands should address the captain's wife when he takes her along. Until someone gives a firm ruling they intend to play safe by sticking to the formula "Dear Sir or Madam."

Thought it was an Ambush

ROAD safety authorities at Burton-on-Trent have taken bold action to neutralize an accident black spot, a nine-foot



high bridge which has been slicing the tops off tall vehicles. An invisible ray, set off by anything higher than nine feet, now illuminates a huge sign with the words "Stop. You can't pass under Bridge," sounds a klaxon horn and directs a red light towards the vehicle. A further step is expected to take the form of a warning about the warning.

No Joke in Urdu

AFTER a visit from Mr. Jarring of Sweden, well known as a member of

the U.N. fact-finding team, the Premier of Kashmir told the world: "A thousand Jarrings will not shake our determination." It is too early to say what effect this will have on the India-Kashmir situation, beyond convincing politicians in those parts that there is every reason for retaining English as a compulsory second language.

Tourist Lure?

AMENITY-LOVERS fear that English rural horizons, already patterned thickly with television aerials, lopped trees and overhead cables, will suffer still further when new-look defence plans get ahead with their rings of rocket-sites. Luckily the *Daily Herald* has done much to allay anxiety with its word-picture of a U.S. Army guided missile in Germany, pointing aloft "like the famous Skylon shown in the Festival of Britain."

Martinet

GENERAL Whisenauz, Deputy Commander of the U.S. Third Air Force stationed in this country, has come out strongly against American behaviour on British roads, and any airmen who in future drive with consistent recklessness "may be dismissed the service or have their wives sent home." In really bad cases it is thought that offenders will be ruthlessly promoted.

Full Circle

REPORTED to be the latest competitor for "stately homes" trade is Thoresby Hall, Nottinghamshire, whose grounds



contain the Great Oak of Sherwood Forest, "a rallying point for Robin

Hood and his men." Commentators on the class revolution will now give up.

Switch off the Sun

THERE seems small prospect that any good news will ever come out of the nationalized industries. Now inured to the idea that the country is to be permanently short of coal, gas and electrical power, taxpayers had at least supposed that the high March temperatures would provide a heaven-sent chance of conserving meagre reserves all round. However, an Electricity Authority spokesman has delivered a surprise blow from a fresh direction, with the announcement that the real result will be "to increase the deficit expected from the Board's trading."

Broadside

H.M.S. *Lynx*, first of a new class of anti-submarine frigates, was welcomed into the Navy by *The Times'* naval correspondent, who pointed out that it was equipped with the Squid mortar rather than the "more advanced" Limbo, that "modern aircraft have clearly outclassed anything a ship like this could hope to do," and that it was difficult to imagine the newcomer's retaining any "great value at sea." Luckily for Britain's maritime security *The Times'* naval correspondent, at any rate, remains as lethal as ever.



Cathode-Ray Hermits?

WHEN a television critic recently complained that the two rival channels had each offered a worthwhile play on the same evening he was ostensibly pleading for some arrangement between the Corporation and the Authority which would allow viewers to get the best of both worlds other than simultaneously. Discerning readers, however, understood that the critic had personal

feelings on this; it is bad enough to be glued to the screen every night of your life: to be glued to two is a hard way to make a living. What is to become of these unfortunate men when those other channels, now blank on their selector switches, complicate the job beyond bearing? Of course some say that the television critic has a fully compensating advantage over his colleagues, because instead of abandoning the sunlight for the musty gloom of a film press show, or suffering the shrill exhibitionism and uninhibited bronchitics of the theatre first night, he can at least spend his days in the green fields and work in the evening by his own fireside. But even these amenities may be on their way out. Three gleaming new aerials went up last week on the roof of the *News of the World* building. The time seems near when the television critic will be keeping office hours like everybody else, alone in a chill, silent street, with no one even to rustle up a thin, half-brewed cup of tea during the commercials.

Nuclear Budget

The megaton explosion of the bomb,
The megawatts we're adding to the grid,
Are sinister forerunners
Of the pocket-splitting stunners
To be reckoned in a scale of megaquid.

Conference-Song of the Uno-Log

(with apologies to Rudyard Kipling)

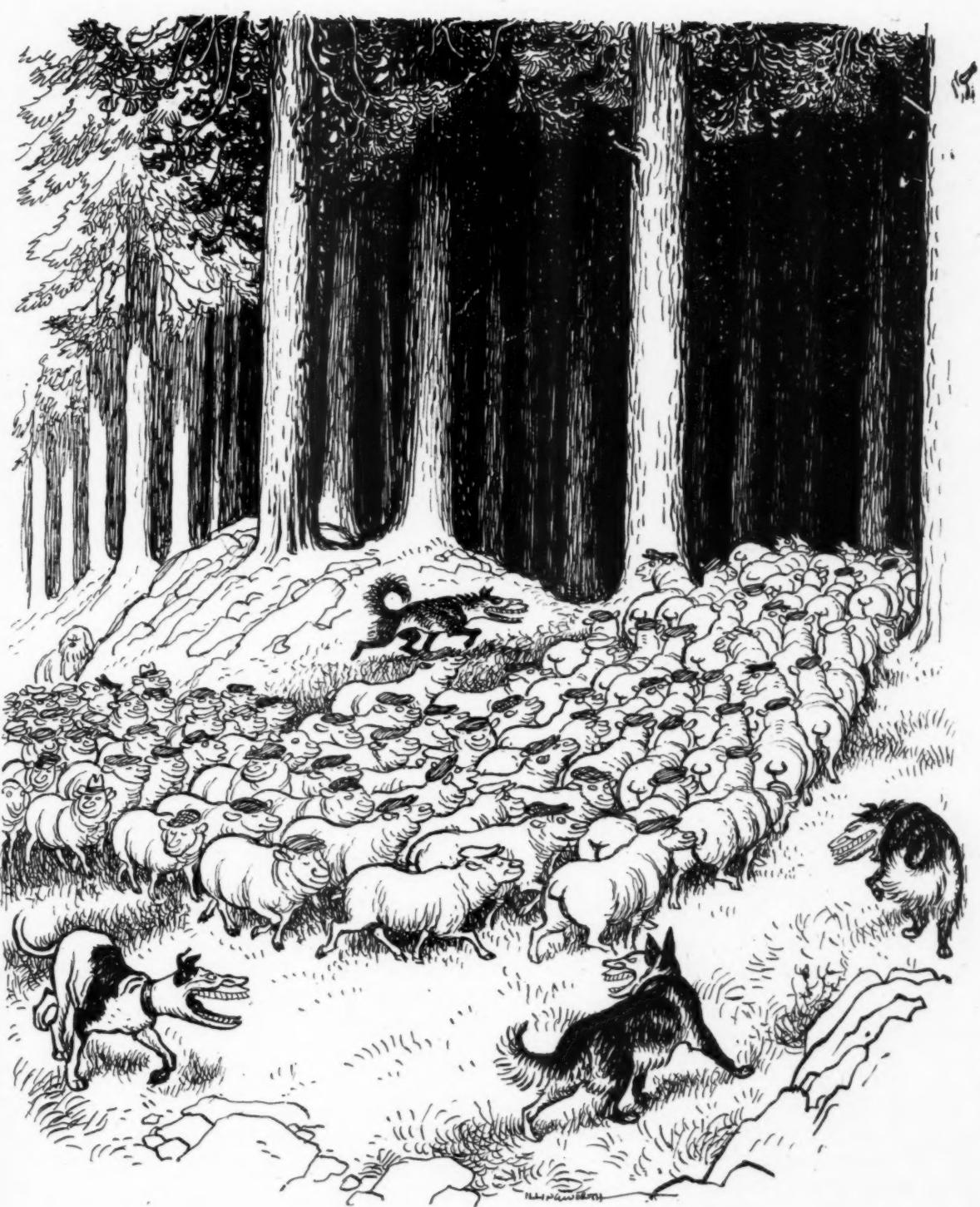
HERE we go with a tireless zest
To sort out Suez and Budapest!
Don't you envy our nimble minds,
Ruling the world on our parked behinds?
And isn't it fun to right a wrong
Simply by chattering all day long?
Now you're angry, but—UNO says
Nothing is solved by force these days.

Here we assemble, year on year,
To settle the fate of far Kashmir,
Dreaming up course after splendid course,
As long as they don't mean using force,
Planning a gay Utopian plan
To make India friends with Pakistan.
Now they're fighting, but—UNO says
Nothing is solved by force these days.

All the dregs of confabulations
At conference, meeting and league of nations,
Range them round in a different pattern
And vomit them up in old Manhattan!
Excellent! Wonderful! Take my tip,
This'll bring peace in the Gaza Strip!
Nasser threatens that . . . UNO says
Nothing is solved by force these days.

Then join our noble bands, with your veto in your hands,
And talk away through night and day, but never make a move.
By our lofty sentiments, and our lack of common sense,
Be sure we'll keep the nations in the same old groove!

B. A. Y.



THE SHEEP STEWARDS

Cockburn's Aspects of English History

Conspectus



HERE is a saying current among the Lancashire peasantry which may roughly be translated as "He who does not find a starting point will not proceed prosperously."

In this sense the first modern Englishman, Albert the Prince Consort, may well serve as a starting point for a more general summation of events. Some of these, we shall inevitably find, are as far apart as the Early Christians, the Early Victorians and the late War. Others are closer together.

Earlier and later events will be dealt with in subsequent chapters.

The method has, technologically, its disadvantages. To borrow the words of Lord Liverpool when he heard of the first railway locomotive, "If it doesn't work, I suppose they'll try something else. If it does, it may be bye-bye to gee-gee."

(He was no doubt embittered at the time by the fact that the only thing known about his policy as Premier was that it was going to be said to have failed. He may also have recalled what James I had done to improve British



horse-breeding. He could hardly have foreseen the full development of the English reply to the French challenge at Newmarket in the late 1950s. But this is to anticipate.)

Like many men of his parentage and up-bringing, the second son of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld was a German. Indeed numerous Germans at that time regarded their status as a matter of course, some even taking a modest pride in it. And the "man-behind-the-scenes" everywhere at the time was Baron Stockmar, another Coburg man.



As was the fashion of those days, cabals were formed, Lords Aberdeen, Palmerston and John Russell were seen everywhere, and thinking men were weighing the consequences, for good or ill, of the introduction of the penny postage.

Undeterred, the Prince Consort quietly perfected his plans for the improvement of Christmas.

The idea is said to have originated when the Prince chanced to overhear Baron Stockmar remarking to Baroness Lehzen that "If a man makes a better Christmas, the world will tread a path to his door." The Prince saw at once that fir trees and other Christmas kit of the German type were almost as easy to get in England as in the environs of Coburg. By the very early 'sixties Messrs. Goodall of London, who previously had devoted themselves to the manufacture of playing-cards, had issued the first authentic Christmas cards, with holly, robins, etc., designed by John Leighton.

"It comes," Baron Stockmar had commented some time earlier, "but once (*bloss einmal*) a year," and the Prince could not but assent. The Shop-Early Movement had begun.

Nevertheless, as so often happens in our western democracies, the situation was not without its dangers. It was, in fact, no time for complacency. To subordinate the national well-being to sectional interests was the sheerest folly. What was required was above all unity of purpose, otherwise our moral leadership would inevitably be lost. The difference between freedom and licence was clear to everyone except to certain "other-directional pattern groups" such as those great landowners who seemed, as one commentator puts it, "to think they were living in the Middle Ages," to those factory-owners, all hard-faced, and many tight-fisted as well, who seemed to think they could live on child labour, and to the Chartist, who seemed to think they were living in early 1918.

The period saw, too, a significant renewal of activity and influence on the part of the Foreign Extremists' and Agitators' Association which, since the days when Blake was arrested as a Napoleonic agent, had been more or less in eclipse. But in a letter written in 1851 the Prince noted that opponents of his Great Exhibition were stating that members of the Association, gathering in Hyde Park for the occasion, were



about "to commence a thorough revolution here, to murder Victoria and myself, and to proclaim the Red Republic in England."

In the event the Association showed itself incapable of fulfilling any of these expectations. Its membership fell off sharply and it suffered a slow decline until revived by Sir William Joynson-Hicks and others in the 1920s.

1851 was a time of profound disillusionment. Many young people looked back with puzzled envy to the 1830s. The Treaty of Nanking, ending



the war with China, and the repeal of the Corn Laws had failed to satisfy the deeper needs of human nature. We, in our truer perspective, can see that they could not have been expected to do so. But to them it had seemed otherwise. Cholera had broken out in London, and over all hung the ever-increasing menace of the Railway. Other nations besides England were pressing ahead with its development, and people asked themselves whether civilization as they knew it was not doomed to extinction; whether in fact man had not, in the steam locomotive, evolved the instrument of his own destruction.

Small wonder that there were some only too ready to accept the crude and violent policies of Colonel Sibthorp as the "way forward." His prayer that either hail or "a visitation of lightning"—his offer of an alternative evinced a certain political cunning—might destroy the roof of the Crystal Palace found open or tacit support in many unexpected quarters.

However, wiser counsels prevailed, and at the meeting of the British Association at Ipswich on July 3, 1851, the Prince was able to hear a paper read by Colonel Reid "On Mooring Ships in Revolving Gales." Immediately it was over another paper was read "On the Contraction of Calico as shown in the Great Exhibition." To the keen-

sighted the episode clearly indicated that the Early Victorians were inevitably giving place to the Mid.

The rest of July passed off quickly enough, and it was evident that people were by now more inclined to meditate on the subject of calico-contraction than on that of assassination. There was reassurance, too, in the knowledge that, should revolving gales occur, experts would be available to moor ships in them.

By August 1 the Prince was at Osborne "reading Radowitz's new *Gespraeche aus der Gegenwart*, which I like much for its just portrayal of parties and their views. What he is driving at, however, I cannot tell. I have also read a treatise by Owen on Parthenogenesis."

This was an instance of early Group-Identification (which Kritz, of the University of Oklahoma, calls "Herd-Together-Feel") and as such is of great significance. All up and down the country the New Middle Classes were reading Owen on Parthenogenesis and Radowitz's *Gespraeche*. They, too, could not tell what was being driven at.

It is in this sense that Radowitz has been hailed as "the first Logical Positivist."

The late Lord Balfour is reported to have said, in his inimitable manner, that "History is an alternation between

the steady, if stertorous, breathing of the drugged sleeper, and a series of hiccoughs often ending in strangulation." Thus the period of general peace inaugurated in 1851 was marked by an almost unbroken succession of international conflicts of ever increasing ferocity and destructiveness.

The Prince may well have taken to heart the words, attributed to Baron Stockmar on his death-bed, "You ain't seen nothin' yet."

Fortunately, perhaps, he could not know that within less than fifty years of the withdrawal of the Sunday Trading Bill and the passing of the Jewish Disabilities Bill there was going to be a *fin de siècle*, surely an unsuitable conclusion to the Victorian Age.

The succeeding years were a period of profound disillusionment. In their confusion and lack of direction many young people found that having learned to know all about Art they had no idea of what they liked. The Boxer Rising, starting a short war with China, and some projected changes in the Betting Laws failed to satisfy the deeper needs of human nature. And over all hung the ever-increasing menace of the motor-car. People asked themselves whether civilization as they knew it was not doomed to extinction. Had man evolved, in the horseless carriage, the instrument of his own destruction?

Small wonder that religion, traditional morality, sex, and standards of decency in public life were threatened with collapse, or that Youth, watching the puny efforts of its elders to save the situation by ordering car-owners to employ men with flags to walk in front of them, felt themselves betrayed and plunged into cynicism, or rallied to the crude policies of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.



My Pretty Maid

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

AS everything is so advanced this year, what about a forward glance at the June Dairy Festival, under whose stacks of preliminary publicity editorial desks are already groaning?

You will at once think of Miss Evelyn Clegg, chosen from a field of two thousand as last year's British Dairy Queen. But her reign is nearing its close. Soon she will be a mere elder stateswoman of milk lending tone to the cow display to be opened in Derby Drill Hall by the Duke of Rutland, or a modest co-celebrity with Lord Mostyn when he kicks off at the Milk Churn Race on Llandudno promenade (eighteen "Festivity Towns" will elect Dairy Princesses, and have made their own arrangements). In June her successor will be crowned. Any young lady between sixteen and twenty-one may aspire to the throne, provided she doesn't mind signing a braggart and possibly perjurious entry form saying "I attribute my good looks and vitality to drinking milk regularly."

The breath of perjury needn't worry

her. Hand-outs from the National Milk Publicity Council assert that dairy farmers and retailers are organizing the affair "to further the economic and bodily health of the nation," when in fact they are organizing it simply to sell more milk. Truth is elastic in these operations. When you're sitting in a Whitehall cowshed, your head nuzzling Buttercup's velvety flank as the health-giving fluid squirts musically into the cash-box, you're so full of the importance of milk that you say anything.

And I would certainly think twice before knocking the Council. I think highly of it, and of its trusted advertising agents who have the cause so keenly at heart that even their official hand-out foolscap has MILK at the top, in white on two shades of blue. I ask myself, how would I set about promoting milk, and not a notion enters my skull.

Should I ever think of crowning a Dairy Queen, for a start? These ideas sound child's-play after someone else has devised them. But there is a period in any campaign, milky or military, when the C.-in-C. sits slumped before

a blank memorandum pad, his head whirling with the fleeting tadpole-tails of half-baked possibilities.

Think of a Queen, and you have to think of a prize for her. Girls who attribute their good looks and vitality to drinking milk regularly don't enter competitions to sit in a bower of cheeses, stroke cows' noses, or to judge a Smart Milkman contest at Harrogate. Moreover, the prize should be something no one else has thought of—not easy in the era of newspaper give-aways—and should be connected intimately with milk. This is where the Council's agents were marvellously inspired, hitting on the very thing, "A thrilling luxury flight to America." And, hard on its heels, a second inspiration for the seventeen runners-up: "A week-end at Woburn Abbey as guest of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford."

After that the floodgates of invention were opened wide and the ideas came foaming through in wild profusion. The nobility and gentry, including (preferably titled) M.P.s, were roped by the dozen and herded into the Council's files, prudently stiffened with people whom the milk-drinking public had actually heard of, like Lady Barnett. Mayors and Corporations in the Festivity Towns were cunningly delegated to stage their own municipal milkfests, and, stimulated by the enthusiasm from above, soon began responding with rich and rare conceptions, all based on a statutory setpiece, "The Story of Milk from Grass to Bottle." This theme is being artistically embroidered in some cases, and will cover Talks on Deportment (Sunderland), a Civic Cheese-Tasting (Weston - super - Mare), a Twenty-five Mile Cycle Race (Cambridge) and an Aerobatic High Wire Act (Battersea Pleasure Gardens). At Morecambe the public will be torn between Stilt Races and a Chimpanzees' Milk Party; Pontypridd scores with a Mystery Milkman and a Civil Defence Display; and there will be Canoeing and a Fire Brigade Demonstration at Southampton, though it is not decided (or, for that matter, mentioned) whether milk will be involved to any marked degree in these events.

To say that the concept is on the grand scale may seem superfluous. I



"They play well together, don't they?"

do so because space forbids more than a mere hint at the myriad ancillary activities: your correspondence, at about that time, will all be franked "June Dairy Festival," by courtesy of the G.P.O.; Employment Exchanges will commend careers in milk, and distribute gay brochures, by courtesy of the Minister of Labour; there will be film shows for schools, and twenty thousand posters displayed in post offices alone, not to mention lavish reminders through the newspapers, hoardings and the advertisement department of Television House. Dairy Cookery Weeks in three hundred towns will provide thrilling battles for propaganda supremacy between nationalized Gas and Electricity. Miss Zoë Newton, the well-known ash-blonde wink behind a pint bottle of you-know-what, will be in about fifty places at once. Four days of baby competitions will disrupt Wallasey. Sabrina will appear at Southend. And Mr. Heathcoat Amory will launch the whole brilliant project at a House of Commons luncheon.

One of the official hand-out foolscaps is headed

"A NEW SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP
Important Results of 1956 June Dairy
Festival,"

and it would be positively churlish to expect anything less from the Festival of 1957. However, it is well known that churls exist, and I wouldn't put it past one of them to start niggling about the cost of it all. If he does, the answer is easy. With milk production subsidized to the tune of £20,000,000 odd annually it can surely afford a bit of a spree now and then.



"And then they've a son in prison, earning good money."

Written in a Queue

By H. F. ELLIS

IT is a great comfort, waiting here for a No. 11, to know that the matter is in hand. The Operational Research Society, employing "methods which were used in the war to improve anti-submarine and anti-aircraft defences," is studying the problem of why buses on certain routes in London are unable to force a way through to their successive objectives except in concentrations of a dozen or more.

Let nobody in this queue imagine that radar is involved or envisaged.

There is no plan to give bus drivers a continuous picture of the traffic at the next intersection, or to enable them to predict the future position of women drivers. At least, if there is such a plan, that is not what is meant by "methods used in the last war." Operational research—as the lady in front with the ex-A.T.S. clerk look probably knows—lived in the past rather than the future; it brooded over completed operations, trying to discover what went wrong and why, and for that purpose its constant need was

Full Information. It liked copies of everything: copies of Operation Orders and Operation Instructions, sheets of figures giving fuse settings, time on target, equivalent constant wind. It wanted to know the age of gun-layers, whether married, and interval between last meal and start of engagement. It was interested in dress, spectacles, morale, droop, barometric pressure and incidence of deafness in G.P.O. Acks. An unmarried predictor number, with overtight gaiters, two children to



support and a badly adjusted hearing-aid, might prove to be regularly 2 degrees off for bearing. Or it might be found that the targets were going faster than an elderly part-time Home Guardsman could traverse his gun. Once the relevant factors had been sorted out by A.O.R.G., the way was clear for another step forward towards absolute accuracy.

If people in this queue would realize that it takes time to assemble information of an equivalent kind about the operation of buses, they might perhaps stop shoving and wait good-humouredly for something to be done. Something indeed has already been done. The fault from which the No. 11 route suffers, it has been discovered, is "dynamic instability"—in other words there is no knowing whether any particular bus is going to arrive early or late or not at all. This is a big advance. And it is not all. Plunging still deeper into the complex problem, Operational Research conclude that a major cause of dynamic instability is time lost in traffic jams. Spectacular proof of the correctness of this theory has been afforded by the recent acute petrol shortage, when it was shown that, with less traffic on the streets, buses ran more regularly.

Another variable—known to the Operational Research Society, it is probably safe to guess, as V, or perhaps KV—is the time spent motionless at the kerbside. Careful analysis of records made in the field indicates that longer stops are necessary where a hundred people are waiting to get on, as here, than when the queue is only one or two strong. Nor can adjustments be

made in the time-schedules by simply averaging out the numbers waiting at each stop at varying periods of the day. There is no direct time-number ratio. The findings of the Society on the subject of Boarding Inertia have not been made public, but there can be no doubt that the kind of problem with which they are now grappling is the tendency of a woman with six parcels and a two-year-old baby (WPB) to take three times as long to get on as four messenger boys and a business man in the prime of life. Facts of this kind can be assembled, by the methods used to improve anti-aircraft defences, no less readily in peace than in war, but their solution, it has to be remembered, presents greater difficulties. Women with parcels or babies, for instance, could in wartime be taken off operational duties on the predictor and be commissioned or discharged as the case might be. No such dictatorial smoothing out of Inefficiency Bulges (I.B.s) is possible in times of peace.

The Society will also, one may assume, be studying the returns of time spent in inter-communication between driver and conductor and attempting to evaluate the advantages of the Regressive (driver-out-of-cab-and-back-to-conductor) Procedure as against the more normal Forward Drift of conductress towards her driver. Whether this so-called "conversation factor" can be reduced by some such arrangement as a meeting half-way, perhaps preceded by a code signal on the bell, is a point on which the Society's recommendations will be awaited with particular eagerness.

From the point of view of Passenger Morale, much may be expected from the Society's labours. Statistics, intelligently presented, can help to spread understanding and smooth out grievances. Thus, if it can be positively shown to the people in this queue that nothing has been lost by waiting ten minutes for the next bus because the six they just missed have been stuck in a jam round the corner for twelve, the Resignation Quotient will perceptibly rise. Alternatively, if the passengers in the jam round the corner can be made aware, by loud-speaker or other means, that their buses are ahead of time and would have been obliged, but for the involuntary hold-up, to crawl for the next—

There, however, owing to the sudden arrival of five No. 11s, the matter must be allowed to rest. The fact that all the people in the front of the queue are running to get into the rearmost bus, while those at the back fight to mount the foremost, is only another example of the operational instability with which the Society has to contend.

The Sunny Side

WHEN I peruse
The morning news—
A dismal thing to do—
I do not trace
For the human race
A future bright and blue.
God—Science—Education—Socialism
Are still astern of silliness and schism:
And down a steep decline
We gallop at a rate
Which makes the Gadarene swine
Seem sober and sedate.

Yet do not hurry to the hearse:
Though things are grim they might
be worse.
The centuries whizz by: but who
Will say we are not moving too?
Great Ike is fluffing putts, I
know;
Nasser's a conquering hero:
Cheer up! Two thousand years
ago
We were ruled by the Emperor
Nero.

A. P. H.

Candidus and the Poets

By LORD KINROSS

CANDIDUS, my guest from afar and a young man of devout disposition, has been inquiring into the nature of our religious observances. He has found much both to enlighten and to puzzle him.

First, I took him to the wedding of two young friends of mine, Jeremy and Nell, at St. Patrick's Church, Soho. To his surprise he found that the service was both in Latin and in English. I explained to him that Jeremy was an Anglican and Nell a Catholic.

"Yet they are permitted to marry?" he inquired, open-eyed.

"Certainly, in a special mixed ceremony."

He seemed greatly taken aback by such tolerance; bewildered also that the two should ever have contrived to meet one another. The words of the anthem surprised him further:

*And now, come forth, faire bride, and
as one flame
Meeting Another, groves the same,
So meeet thy Jeremy, and so
To an inseparable union grove.*

"That is a *religious* hymn?" he asked.
"Yes. It was written by John Donne."
"Especially for this marriage?"
"No. In the seventeenth century."
"And was he a Catholic or an Anglican?"

"A Catholic who became an Anglican."

"Ah! an apostate. It is a sort of love poem, is it not?"

"Well, yes. This is the best of all possible marriages. It is for love."

Feeling that perhaps he should attend a more characteristic English service I sent him one Sunday to St. Paul's Cathedral, where Donne, I explained, had once been Dean.

He returned clearly impressed by the experience, but pensive.

"It is a very fine building," he said.

"The best of all possible."

"But somehow it is not very like a church. It is not dark at all, but light and airy. Its style is rather that of some great City hall. And a great many generals are buried there."

"And the sermon, how was it?"

"It was preached by a Canon," he said. "Canon Knight. It was in certain respects strangely heretical. He said,

for example, that the Flood, which destroyed all mankind, is unlikely ever to have happened. There would not have been room in one barge for all those animals. It must only have been quite a small local flood. Yet it is written in Genesis?"

"Nowadays," I explained, "we do not take Genesis very literally."

"So it seems." Candidus pursed his lips with severity. "The Canon said it was one of the best stories ever written, and the character-drawing was all you could hope for in a modern novel. A *novel!* He also mentioned Aristotle and Cicero, and said that the Christian Church had taken over a lot of *their* teachings."

"What other heresies did he utter?" I asked with a smile.

"That was all, I think. But he did quote the Declaration of Independence, which is surely a political rather than a religious document. And he spoke of the guarantees that the Almighty had given to the world, in Genesis, referring in this connection to science and industry and transport and agriculture. He preached, I thought, rather in the tones of a delegate to the United Nations, or of a man addressing—well, a meeting of shareholders."

I laughed. "You will find," I said, "that the English are rather a matter-of-fact people when it comes to religion. In the City of London especially. Next Sunday I will take you to a service of the Church of Scotland, in Edinburgh. The Scotch, you will find, are even more matter-of-fact."

On the way up to St. Giles's Cathedral I told him a little of John Knox, a Catholic turned Presbyterian who had preached from its pulpit against the Catholics, and of Jenny Geddes who, in a similar spirit, had flung her stool at a High Anglican minister.

"So the preacher this evening will be very stern," he remarked with satisfaction. "Sternier than Canon Knight?"

"That remains to be seen. He is a poet." For it chanced that the preacher, invited for the occasion by the dignitaries of the University, was Professor W. H. Auden.

"A poet? Like John Donne?"

"Not very. A modern poet."

"But, like John Knox, also a Presbyterian and a minister?"

"No. A High Anglican. And not a minister."

"Then the congregation will fling their stools at him?"

"It is to be hoped not."

"He will recite poetry?"

"I doubt it. It is the business of the poet to-day to be also a Thinker, a Public Speaker, a Lecturer, a Sage. To-morrow evening Professor Auden will be speaking on opera, and in the morning he will be speaking on detective fiction."

The cathedral was full to overflowing. Two separate choirs took part in the service—choirs of ladies mostly, one dressed in purple and one in scarlet. The elders of the Kirk looked solemn. Presently the Poet stepped into the



pulpit, where he delivered a witty and illuminating address, based on a text from the Gospel according to St. Matthew, maintaining paradoxically that there could be no such thing as Christian but only pagan art and literature. I hesitated to look at the severe face of Candidus while such names as Aphrodite, Dionysus and Buddha rang—surely for the first time—through the vaults of St. Giles's. The elders of the Kirk moved not a muscle. The congregation listened with rapt attention, and when the service was over hundreds of them proceeded to a neighbouring hall to discuss these matters with the preacher in greater detail. Next day, in surroundings a trifle less sacred, Candidus had the opportunity to meet Professor Auden, who mollified him considerably by inviting him to visit him on the island of Ischia.

Candidus was by now greatly interested in poets, so the following Sunday

I took him to spend "An Evening with Stephen Spender."

"It will be in a church?" he inquired.
"No. In a theatre."

The atmosphere, none the less, was distinctly ecclesiastical. The lights were dim, there was a reverent hush, and on the stage Mr. Spender, attended by an actor and an actress, stood, dressed in a dinner jacket with a gleaming white shirt front and a benign expression, his venerable white hair catching the light like a halo. In a gentle and kindly voice he introduced, for recitation by the actor and actress, first the poems by other poets that he had enjoyed between the ages of nine and sixteen, then the poems by other poets that he had enjoyed in his later teens, then the poems he had written himself when his teens were at an end. Some of these he recited in person. Candidus was deeply impressed, especially by a poem about a Classroom in a Slum.

"Canon Spender," he whispered, "has the manner and appearance of a *really* holy man."

"I'm sure he is."

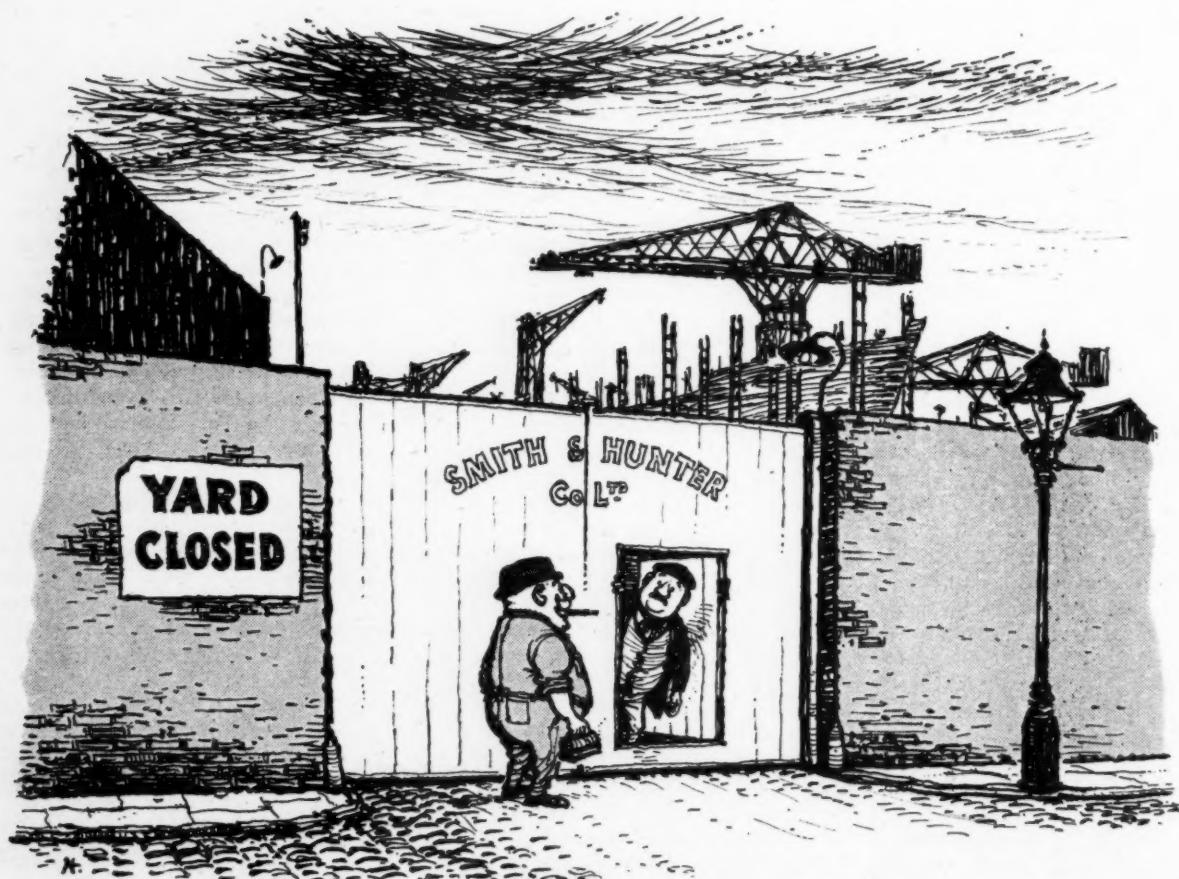
"He seems to be filled with human kindness, especially towards the poor. He is the greatest of all possible English poets?"

"Not quite. He hardly writes poetry now. He is purely a Thinker. He edits a magazine. He gives lots of lectures."

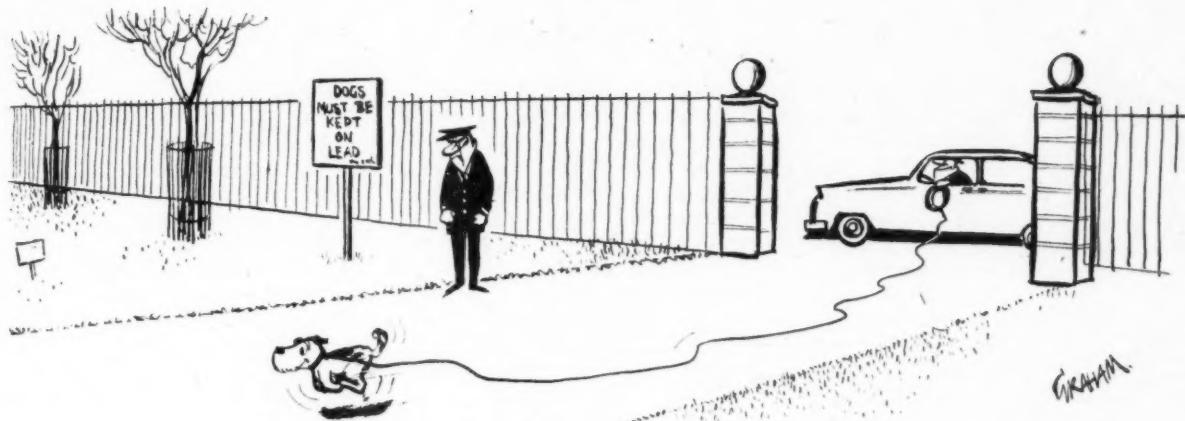
"Then who is the greatest?"

"The greatest was a Welshman called Dylan Thomas, who died. The next greatest is an American who lives in England called Mr. Eliot. The third greatest is Professor Auden, an Englishman who lives in America, whom you have heard."

"To me," he replied, "Canon Spender is the greatest. I hope that he will be preaching next Sunday in St. Paul's Cathedral in place of Canon Knight."



"During the 1926 strike I drove a G.W.R. locomotive."



The Hunting of the Spetzkhran

By MICHAEL FRAYN

IN Moscow, so long as you stay on the well-marked tourist orbit of the Agricultural Exhibition, the Power Institute and the Red October Sweet Factory, you are in a tangible, three-dimensional world where everyone is cheerful, helpful, and plays football in his spare time. But if you once tangent off this orbit you are immediately in a universe of fog, where no one knows or cares about anything.

One of my tangents into the fog started in the Foreign Literature Library which was supposed to be the best source of foreign newspapers and magazines in Moscow. After I had looked at the catalogue I went off to ask a senior-looking woman librarian why there were forty-four issues of the *Daily Express* missing and why the *Observer* had stopped at the end of January, 1956.

The suggestion that there were any papers missing appeared to amuse the librarian a great deal. *Of course* they were all there. So I showed her the catalogue. At this she stopped laughing and said that perhaps I had better speak to a comrade from upstairs.

I waited twenty minutes for the comrade to come down. When he came he turned out to be a very confident young man who looked very splendidly Communist. He said in English that he had been told I wanted to be shown over the library. I said no, I just wanted to find out why there were forty-four *Daily Expresses* missing from the catalogue.

"Forty-four!" he replied cheerfully; "that *would* be a lot to be missing. But we'll find them all in the big catalogue."

So we had a look at the big catalogue. There were forty-four *Daily Expresses* missing. At this point the comrade relapsed rather sulkily into Russian and tried to interest me in a catalogue of scientific journals. Reminded about the forty-four *Daily Expresses*, he said maybe they were being worked on, or had gone to the wrong departments of the library, or had got lost in the post. I expressed polite sympathy and asked why the *Observer* had stopped at the end of January.

"Oh, that," he said; "that was because after January the company refused to send it any more."

I couldn't keep a straight face any longer. The picture of the *Observer's* editorial board suddenly going all mean and narrow-minded at the end of January and refusing to send their paper to Russia was too sudden and astonishing. I didn't want to grin at this splendid comrade, but I just couldn't help myself.

To my enormous surprise he grinned back, and soon we were getting on so well that I thought we might try a round or two of the *spetzkhran* game. All the big Soviet libraries have a *spetzkhran*; it's the "special store" where they keep the politically dangerous books which only the very specially selected and very very splendidly Communist comrades are allowed to see. Mentioning the word in conversations with Soviet

officials is like mentioning an obscene oath in polite conversation here. People pretend either not to hear it or not to understand it.

Anyway, I said "May I see the *spetzkhran*?"

"What's a *spetzkhran*?" asked the comrade, creamily innocent.

I grinned and told him. He grinned and said he'd never heard of such a thing. Well, we were both so cheerful and full of grinning at this stage that I didn't have to ask him more than four or five times before he got out pen and paper and wrote down its address for me.

The address turned out to be the Foreign Literature Publishing House. It was a group of red-brick buildings set back from the road in a sort of scruffy estate full of mangy bushes mixed up with heaps of coal. It looked rather like an English grammar-school gone to seed.

The whole estate was silent and dismal and entirely deserted except for one or two people who seemed to be standing around waiting for something to happen. I asked one of them where the *spetzkhran* was. He pointed at one of the buildings and said "Third floor." I went in. The staircase had a red carpet, and there was an outsize bust of Lenin painted silver on one of the landings. On the third floor I found a library. In the entrance hall to it was sitting a group of fiercely intellectual young women engaged in a lively discussion, which they broke off when I entered to stare at me. No, it wasn't

the *spetzkhran*, they said; the *spetzkhran* was in the building at the end of the drive.

The building at the end of the drive had the appearance of a sawn-off water tower and an air of long-standing disuse. I found a disused-looking door and went in. The ground floor was completely bare and thick with dust; it seemed to be in the middle of some sort of abandoned demolition operation.

I came out again. Outside I met a woman who looked as lonely and lost as myself. She asked me where the door was. I showed her the one I had just come out of, and we went back in together and made a tour of inspection of the ground floor. Quite soon we found a staircase.

On the very top floor there was a little office, and in it a sullen-faced girl reading a book. I asked her where the *spetzkhran* was. No answer. I asked her twice more, and finally she very unwillingly lifted her head from her book and said shortly "Downstairs."

The woman I had come up with had disappeared, so I went down by myself and outside into the grey afternoon. I walked slowly round the building, but there were no other doors. I felt a sensation of hopeless, baffled misery.

And then a man came into sight. I asked him where the *spetzkhran* was.

He was a nice, unassuming little man, not at all splendid, and he offered to take me to it.

We went back through the disused door, past the peeling walls, and finally came to a sort of ditch in the floor, with a plank leading across it into an inner room which, in the semi-darkness, I had not noticed. This inner room was all bare boards and dust, too. But in one wall there was an iron door.

On this the man knocked. There was no answer. He knocked again—then again and again and again. "I know they're there," he said. He started to kick the door hard, and at last it was very cautiously opened and a woman let us in.

The room inside was also full of dust and peeling walls. A quick glance round revealed nothing more exciting than a few seedy old books lying around, which might have been English dictionaries. Then I turned to the woman, who was looking at me with an apprehensive unhappiness, as if she expected me to pull out a gun and steal the petty cash.

I asked her if this was the *spetzkhran*. She waited for a long time, as if she hoped it would suddenly turn into something else, and then admitted that it was. I asked her if I could apply for a book (I wanted to see if they had *Animal Farm*). There was a pause, and

then she said no, it was impossible. I asked her why. She thought for a long time. Because the department was in the middle of moving to a new address.

"When will the move be finished?"

A pause.

"I don't know."

"About how long will it take?"

Another pause.

"I don't know."

"Well," I asked desperately, "will it take, say, two weeks, perhaps?"

She thought about this for some time.

"Perhaps," she ventured.

And then I panicked.

I had found the *spetzkhran* and got inside it. I ought to have written down the address they were moving to, demanded to be shown round what books they had, asked for this and insisted on that. But I didn't. Like a swimmer who suddenly realizes that he has swum out of reach of the shore I suddenly realized that this conversation, this building, this whole expedition, had entirely lost contact with reality. My mind went blank. I mumbled "Thank you," and rushed out of the room.

My panic didn't start to subside until I had got onto the solid, splendid Metro, and didn't subside completely until I had reached the room of a solid, splendid Young Communist, who gave me tea and chocolate cake and told me Einstein was an Idealist. I was safely back on the orbit again.

HEROES OF OUR TIME

We have received a great number of requests for reproductions of the "HEROES OF OUR TIME" portraits by Ronald Searle. A limited number of these are now available, at 2/6 each post paid, or as a complete set of 12 at 30/- post paid. They are reproduced in full colour, complete with title and verse, size 18" x 11½", and supplied unfolded. Please send your order and remittance to: The Circulation Manager, PUNCH, 10 Bouvier Street, London, E.C.4.

In addition to the portrait of Lord Russell in this issue, the series contains: Sir Malcolm Sargent; Gilbert Harding; Lord Chief Justice Goddard; Aneurin Bevan; T. S. Eliot; Lord Beaverbrook; H.R.H. Princess Margaret; The Dean of Canterbury; Sir Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh; The Marquess of Salisbury; General Sir Brian Robertson.



"If only the nations of the earth would conduct their affairs with ordinary human decency I shouldn't have to perjure myself for supplementaries."

*The Middlebrow

I SAW an ordinary man
A-leaning on his gate;
I said: "Pray do the best you can
Your tastes and such to state.
Not from the B.B.C. I come,
Not from the Gallup Poll;
I merely have a wish to plumb
The normal British soul."

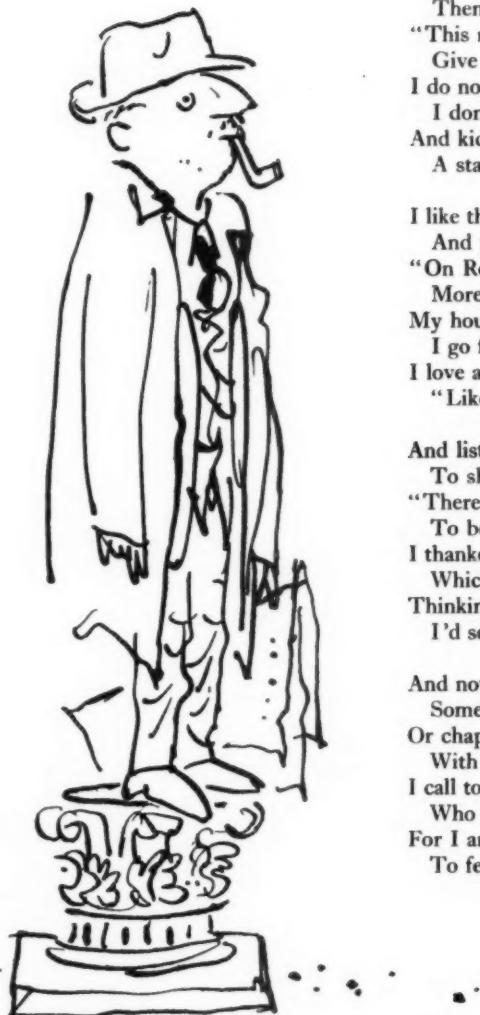
He sucked his pipe and thought awhile,
Then answered loud and long:
"This modern music makes you smile;
Give me 'The Desert Song.'
I do not hold with poetry;
I don't trust foreign food;
And kiddies never ought to see
A statue in the nude.

I like the films that have a star,
And yes," (he gave a nod)
"On Royalty I ponder far
More deeply than on God.
My house is brown-and-cream inside;
I go for beaded oak.
I love a crowded beach," he cried,
"Like all good British folk.

And listen here—" (he raised a hand
To show his earnestness);
"There is no paper in the land
To beat the old *Express!*"
I thanked him for our little quiz,
Which left me feeling fine;
Thinking how low a brow was his,
I'd seen how high was mine.

And now, whene'er by chance I meet
Some speaker on the Third,
Or chaps who write reviews replete
With every O.K. word,
I call to mind that worthy man
Who smoked his pipe and leant;
For I am doing all I can
To feel intelligent.

ANGELA MILNE



Konrad Spreng



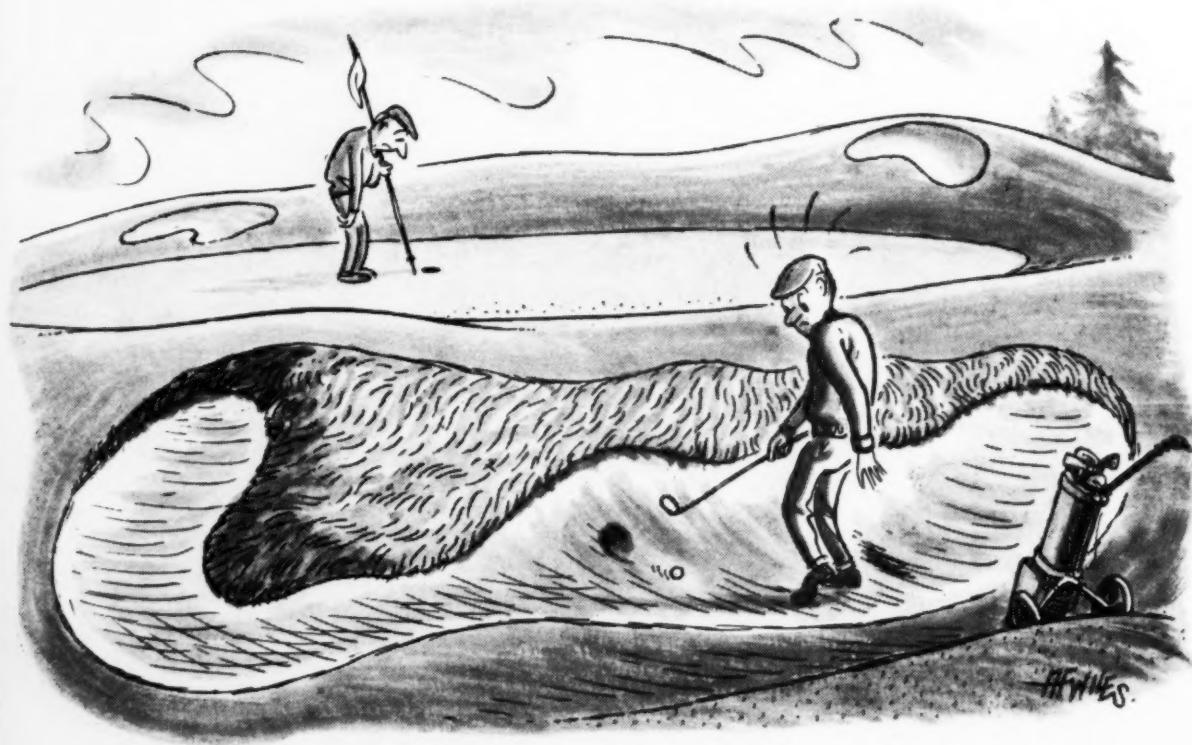
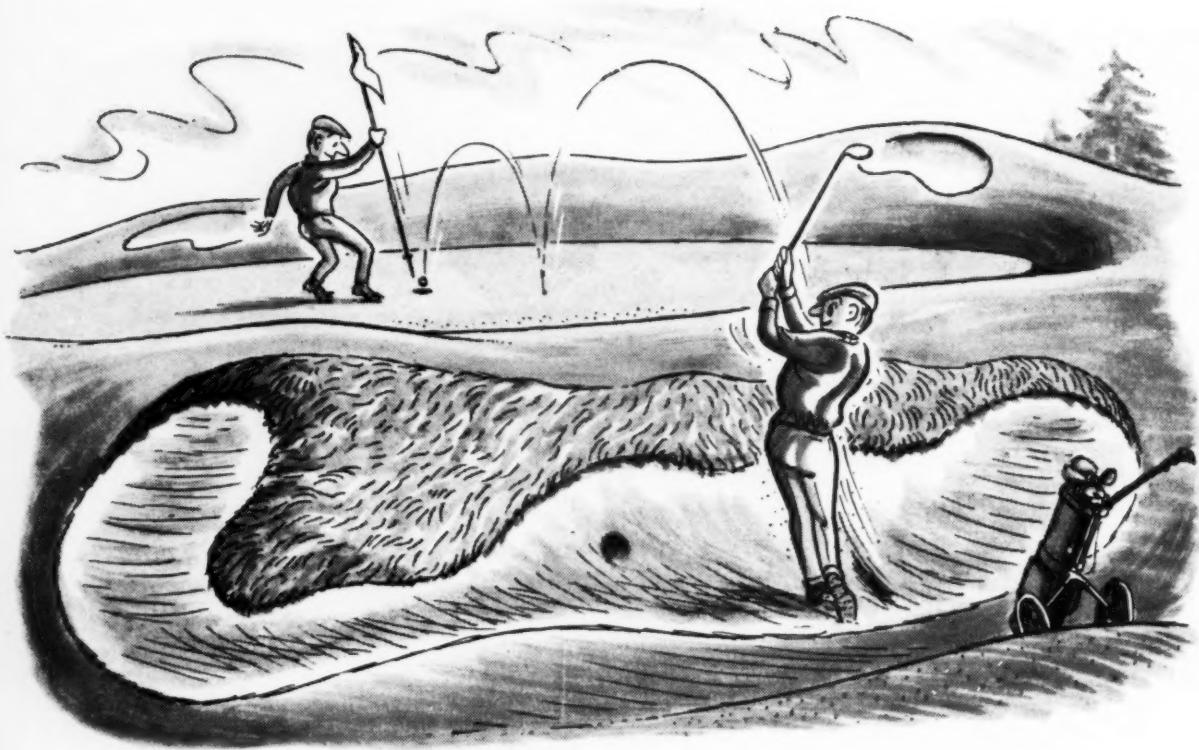
Lord Russell

All earthly knowledge finally explored,
Man feels himself from doubt and dogma free.
There are more things in Heaven, though, my lord,
Than are dreamed of in your philosophy.

HEROES OF OUR TIME — 12



PUNCH, March 27 1957



America Day by Day

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

I ALWAYS strive in these communications from America to confine myself to the really important happenings on this side, so I will begin to-day by announcing that, according to John Crosby of the *Herald-Tribune*, who knows practically everything, the word "sincere" is no longer vogue in Hollywood. It used to be that if you were shown a picture in the projection room, all you had to do when people came to you and said "Well?" was to reply "Sincere. Very sincere" and you were considered a penetrating critic. Do it to-day and eyebrows are raised on every side, not to mention lips pursed. "Real and truthful" is what you have to say now, with a short pause after the "real." The other night Miss Erin O'Brien, the movie star, was on Ed Sullivan's television programme, and he commented on the attractiveness of her hair-do.

"Yes," said Miss O'Brien, "they changed it in the studio. It used to be out to here."

"I like it this way," said Mr. Sullivan.

"Me, too," said Miss O'Brien. "It's more real and truthful."

Now that rock and roll is the topic on every lip it is interesting to learn from Mr. Dizzie Gillespie, the eminent band leader, just what kind of music it is. "What kind of music would you call rock and roll?" a reporter asked Mr. Gillespie. The maestro paused for a moment, marshalling his thoughts and seeking for the *mot juste*.

"It's a sort of shshugamah, shshugamah, shshugamah," he said at length. "It goes with the bird groups, the singers who shout whooooo whooooo."

We get you, professor. Had a kind of a feeling all along that that is what it was.

Mr. Gillespie went on to say something which makes one feel as if one had just escaped by a hair's breadth from some hideous accident.

"If Elvis Presley wasn't Elvis Presley," he said, "he would be a bird group."

It makes one thankful—as one never thought one would be—that Elvis Presley *is* Elvis Presley.

Red Smith, the sports writer whom I was quoting the other day on the subject

of college footballers' salaries, has been going further into this very controversial matter. "There are," he writes, "hints of a new austerity overtaking amateur sports all over this land. A dispatch has come from St. Louis, where the National Collegiate Athletic Association is in convention, concerning a reduction in ceiling prices on backs and half-backs. Under the N.C.A.A.'s latest ruling a college football player isn't allowed to get rich even if he works."

It seems that in establishing an amateur footballer's salary at any of America's great colleges his employers are now required to look into his other sources of income—parking cars, shooting craps and inspecting the campus daily for wild thrips and stray gazelles are some of the gainful occupations Mr. Smith mentions—so as to make sure that his total does not exceed "accepted educational expenses." The effect of the new ruling, as Mr. Smith points out with pitiless clarity, is to deny to an athlete the opportunities for financial success and the rewards of initiative which are permitted to other scholars. Thus a science student, let us say, can build up a prosperous bootlegging industry, selling the stuff to his college chums and pocketing the proceeds, but if a member of the football team should show similar enterprise his profits would be deducted from what the college pays him for playing football.

If this is not unfair discrimination it would be interesting to know what is.

In a previous bulletin some weeks ago I drew attention to the problems that keep confronting the American teen-age girl. There is probably no section of the community that finds life more difficult. "I am sixteen," writes a young correspondent to the heart-balm expert of one of the morning papers, "and I love a fellow of twenty very much, but there are a few things wrong with him. He doesn't like work, and he has flat feet. What do you advise?"

The answer: "Get him a pair of arch supports and tell him to go out and find a job."

Good news for those who want rabbits' ears to droop like a cocker spaniel's comes to-day from the New York Heart Association, whose Doctor Lewis Thomas has discovered that the trick can be done by injecting enzyme papain into the rabbit, and the Association are pretty pleased about it all. Easily pleased, in my opinion. I mean, let's face it. After all the smoke has cleared away, Thomas, what have you got? A rabbit from whose ears all the starch has been removed. If you like that sort of rabbit, well and good, I have nothing to say, but I think children and nervous people should be warned in case they meet one unexpectedly.



"What's it to-day? H-bombs or Eleven-plus?"

The Seen and the Unseen

BY ALISON ADBURGHAM

WHAT Norman Hartnell does in the world of fashion is always news, but not always good news. When it was announced that he was designing a collection of lingerie there were some doubts whether this specialized medium was one in which the Queen's dressmaker could—or even should—excel. The grand occasion gown, with all stops out, we knew to be his forte; could he be sufficiently *piano* for the delicate arpeggios of lingerie? "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter"; and so it is with the seen and the unseen, with the dress and the mysteries under the dress.

Mr. Hartnell's first performance, however, was more than adequate. Indeed his lingerie is hauntingly beautiful. He has an adorable touch with a *négligée*; while his slips, and his waist-length semi-slips, his demi-semiscanties, all show inspired virtuosity. There are "waltz-length" nightdresses of sheer white nylon over pink, or over blue, counterpointed with little bows; and there are penny-spot nightdresses, waltz-length again, with matching quilted housecoats to slip on when it isn't waltz time. But the Hartnell touch is most sure of all in a flowing nightdress with

three superb roses blooming on the bodice. This model has a gossamer stole to caress the shoulders, held at the wrists with bracelets of roses.

A less languorous, bolder note is struck by a grand peignoir. This is made in a new moss nylon, which looks like velvet but has all nylon's laundering virtues. In dramatic midnight blue, with white fox cuffs, this is a peignoir fit for a *Dame aux Camélias* to die in. Only does one wonder whether to-day there are the splendid creatures worthy, if that is the word, to wear such creations. This is an emotionally impoverished age, and the manner of dressing tends to be equally temperate. The days are gone when lace flowed in torrents from tempestuous bosoms, and the chaise-longue was a holocaust of blazing recriminations. Yet, who knows? Fashion, with her soft draping fabrics, her chiffons and mousselines, is doing her best to evoke them, to recall us to the boudoir. The clothes women wear influence their lives as much as the lives women lead influence their clothes. These luxuriant Hartnells are now in the shops and will soon be in the bedrooms of the blessed. It may well be that their lovely wearers will develop, on Monday, temperamental tendencies towards the melting mood; on Tuesday the disdainfully remote; on Wednesday the distractingly possessive. Capriciousness will once more be woman's proud and maddening prerogative.

A few models in this collection are in opaque Terylene crêpe, but on the whole the impression is diaphanous—which seems the general tendency to-day. On the other hand, Angela Gore, a young designer of nightdresses and housecoats who sees things with the eyes of the recently risen generation, holds the theory that gossamer fabrics are the stuff of solitary dreamers; that the attraction of femininity, when it comes to fact not fancy, lies more in concealment than revealment. Real silk is rarely used now, except for hand-made exquisites. Apart from its cost, there is its upkeep: silk does not dry quickly, and cannot be worn unironed; silk goes with ladies' maids, and ladies' maids have, for the most part, gone. But there is opaque nylon, and with this Angela Gore makes a petunia pink

nightdress with permanently pleated bertha collar. And in Woollands now, there is her drip-dry, no-iron, cotton nightdress with matching housecoat, in a charming moss-rose print by Bernard Ashley. This has a morning-picked freshness, delicious for early breakfast before a busy day—an occasion requiring quite a different manifestation from that given by the soft *négligée* worn for *petit déjeuner au lit* before a day of idle dalliance or gentle sight-seeing in some foreign town.

But that the sheer and the short is frequently favoured, even where the climate and the way of life would not seem in keeping, is shown by the Keystone "Baby Doll" nightdress. This is barely knee-length, and has a scooped neckline trimmed with angel lace and baby ribbon. There are also "Baby Doll" pyjamas: gossamer jacket just covering, but no more, the brief puff panties. The makers are confident that these will be snapped up in Scotland and the North where last year, it seems, the desire for "gossamers" was insatiable. Their collection, however, also includes a series of Victorian nightdresses in a contemporary no-iron version of old-fashioned lawn. One of these neo-Victorians has a demure *broderie anglaise* bodice and deep hem frill, threaded with pink ribbon; another has a ribbon-threaded camisole top. No-iron lawn also makes prissy petticoats; but in the main, petticoats follow the Limper Line—not actually molluscan, merely clinging. This line is shown in dead straight slips, slit at the sides or at the centre back, for wearing under slim skirts and sheath dresses. In firm materials, they act as a lining to tight skirts, resisting seating.

What goes on underneath all this is of considerable moment. To-day's corsetry, it was said at the annual luncheon of the Corsetry Manufacturers' Association, is both decorative and functional. That it can be both is something still distrusted by a prodigious number of women to whom functional implies bones, busks, and batiste. A North-country manufacturer of these traditional tortures denies that his customers are a dying race: his sales go up each year. And the latest edition of the Sears Roebuck catalogue, that family



mail-order bible of a million American homes, tells a similar tale. It depicts such ironclads and dreadnaughts as one had thought were scuttled long ago, leading one to exclaim:

*"What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?"*

But back to the decorative: never before has an early spring brought out such a fair flowering of foundations, such a burgeoning of brassières. Most vernal is the Gossard "Spring Bride" girdle, with its flower-embroidered front panel; and it has a sister girdle, chastely decorated with gold Lurex thread. How pert the little pantie-belt, blue-spotted, with its blue-spotted suspenders to match. How provocative the pantie-girdle which glitters with coloured rhinestones and diamanté stars. For Madame, rather than Mademoiselle, there is the long-line brassière of black lace lined with scarlet marquesite, its black suspenders finished with scarlet satin tabs. All contemporary corsetry is either white or black; pink has become utterly provincial. Colour and chic are added by embroidery, or in brilliant linings to net or lace.

For the pleasure bestowed by the contemplation of pure artistry one must visit Illa Knina. A foundation from Madame Knina costs about sixty guineas. Her clients include princesses, royal duchesses, actresses—all the most famous and flattered figures in London are moulded by her foundations. These are *couture* corsets: made to measure, made to last, made with dedication and delight; made in nylon brocades, black-and-gold, blue-and-gold, green-and-silver . . . and in magnificently colourful Italian flower prints. They are the costume-museum pieces of the future. Illa Knina was the first *corsetière* to use nylon. That was in 1942, and she has used nothing but nylon and elastic nylon, lined with cotton, ever since. Even for the heaviest figures her foundations are light and lissom boneless wonders. Originally she was a *corsetière* in Vienna and Prague. She came to London at Munich time without a single English client, without a penny for publicity. Yet—and this she cannot explain—from the very first day the clients came . . . and now they come from far and wide. Emerson was right: "If a man makes a better mousetrap than his neighbour the world will make a beaten path to his door."



"One other thing: if you could slip in a little bit about Lord Beaverbrook we'd be sure of selling the serial rights."

Minority Report

Of every thousand babies born fifty-three will be admitted to a mental hospital, reports the Institute of Psychiatry of the University of London.

YOU nineteen smug in sanity have laughter and are glad,
Despising in your vanity the one eccentric sad;
The mourner's a minority, the nonconformist's bad,
And so, decrees authority, unhappy men are mad.

You high priests of normality observe your fellows' rules,
Enjoying gay sodality, the telly and the pools,
The ruthless fierce vivacity of men in drinking schools,
The love of lush loquacity that logic never cools.

But is it so nefarious for solitude to seek?
For us, the non-gregarious, let ancient wisdom speak:
When language was more dignified an ἀδιάτης (Greek)
"A private person" signified, and not a horrid freak.

LESLIE MARSH

ESSENCE



OF PARLIAMENT



THERE's no ball like a snowball for keeping speculation about the future alive, and once again, as in the previous week, the shadow of graver things hung over the House, but there was nothing much that the House could do about them. Questions were asked of Mr. Macleod on Monday and answered, but they did not get us very much further—no more did somewhat academic discussions on whether arbitration was a good thing or whether restrictive practices should be removed. So the House—a thin House—had to turn itself to London housing. It was Mellish's Benefit. Mr. Mellish is the latest Labour Member to be allowed to bat from the Opposition Front Bench, and he possessed, as he firmly boasted, a birth qualification to play for London. He gave an admirable send-off to the debate and sat down to loud and well deserved cheers. The debate afterwards trickled a little lamely. Everyone agreed that too many people and too much industry were anxious to find a home in London. There has indeed grown up a sort of insane fad that no life can be lived and no business can be done other than in London. It is not easy to say

how this fad can be broken save by a Government that is willing to take powers of direction—to forbid people to come and live in London or to bring their factories there; but no one on the other side is (very rightly) quite willing to say that the Government should have such powers. Meanwhile Mr. Deedes, whose recent journey—an entirely voluntary journey—has been from Front Bench to Back Bench, maintained from his own ministerial experience that relations between the Ministry of Housing and the Board of Trade were not as close as they should be. The fact—we have got to face it—is that people do not like moving from London to the new towns and that the neighbours of the new towns do not greatly welcome them when they come. People like staying put. It is not in itself an unhealthy instinct, but it creates a problem.

Mr. Nabarro would not have foreigners here treated on the Health Service for their ailments. But the cost of all the foreigners, said Mr. Vaughan Morgan, is only £150,000 a year. If we are more generous than other countries in our treatment of foreigners would Mr. Nabarro really be so curmudgeonly as to deprive us of this pleasant title to respect? The good Samaritan was a little out of pocket, but the general view is that he gained spiritually on the bargain. If we cannot let foreigners off passports and Customs examination, at least let us give them teeth.

The debate on the social services again did not get us very much farther. Everyone knew that a substantial part of the truth lay with the Liberal amendment, moved by Mr. Wade, which complained that neither Government since the war had succeeded in checking inflation. So long as inflation is going on, this—with many other problems—is substantially insoluble. The well-known formula of the vicious spiral forbids solution. So really it was to little purpose to think of ways in which ideally the Government could be more

generous, when such generosity would merely put the books further out of balance; nor did the argument, interesting in itself, between Mr. Vosper and Miss Bacon, whether the money should come out of taxation or out of contributions, get to the root of it. For, as things are, it is little more than an argument whether it comes out of the left-hand or the right-hand pocket.

Mr. MacDermot made a maiden speech which gave pleasure, in which he complained of the sense of popular frustration with the Government. He professed an ambition to be, in accordance with custom, as non-controversial as possible, and in this indeed he succeeded, for though there was much sense in what he said, there was no denying that he might have made the same speech word for word had he been elected as Conservative Member for North Lewisham in a by-election seven years before. By far the most notable speech of the debate was from Sir Keith Joseph. He started off by good-humouredly ragging Dr. Summerskill for her failure to admit how many of the charges which she brought against this Government could have been brought



The Chancellor of the Exchequer



Mr. Iain Macleod—Minister of Labour

more tellingly against the last Labour one. Dr. Summerskill, nettled, did not answer his points of substance, but a little foolishly interrupted to correct inessential details such as that her previous title was Minister of National Insurance, not Minister of Pensions. Then Sir Keith adroitly divided the enemy by contrasting the constructiveness of Miss Bacon's speech with the unconstructiveness of that of Dr. Summerskill and finished off with his own powerful and sympathetic plea for those who are just above the subsistence level. Good hard-hitting debating, fluency, pleasant manner, constructive criticism—it was a model of what a Parliamentary speech should be and so rarely is. Sir Keith Joseph is a comparative newcomer to the House, but looks like establishing himself as one of its most valuable Members.

On Wednesday the House learned for light relief that what the good people of Wardle thought were flying saucers from Mars were really two fivepenny red balloons from a laundry in Rochdale. On graver issues Mr. Macleod had come to think that there was more in Mr. Grimond's suggestion of tying in an inquiry on restrictive practices than he had been inclined to allow earlier in the week. He also repeated his compliments to Mr. Bevan for his suggestion. But Mr. Bevan's troubles these days lie not with the Government but with his own colleagues. To them he is a dog standing on its hind legs in reverse. Their objection to his interventions was not that the creature did it ill but that it did it at all. He was poaching on the preserves of colleagues.

It was far from clear what the proposed new look in Cyprus added up to. Archbishop Makarios would be allowed to leave the Seychelles if he denounced terrorism—but then surely that was always so. If the Government had been proposing to hand over responsibility for Cyprus to N.A.T.O. that would indeed have been news—but Mr. Lennox-Boyd assured Major Sharples that there was no such intention. If EOKA were actually suspending—though only “suspending”—violence, that would have been news, but, alas, the grisly evidence shows that that is not so. Anyway, such hopes as there may have been that an easy way out had been found were dashed within a few hours by the Greek Government's

summary rejection of the N.A.T.O. proposals, and, as with Budget leaks, we know rather less after we have been told than we knew before.

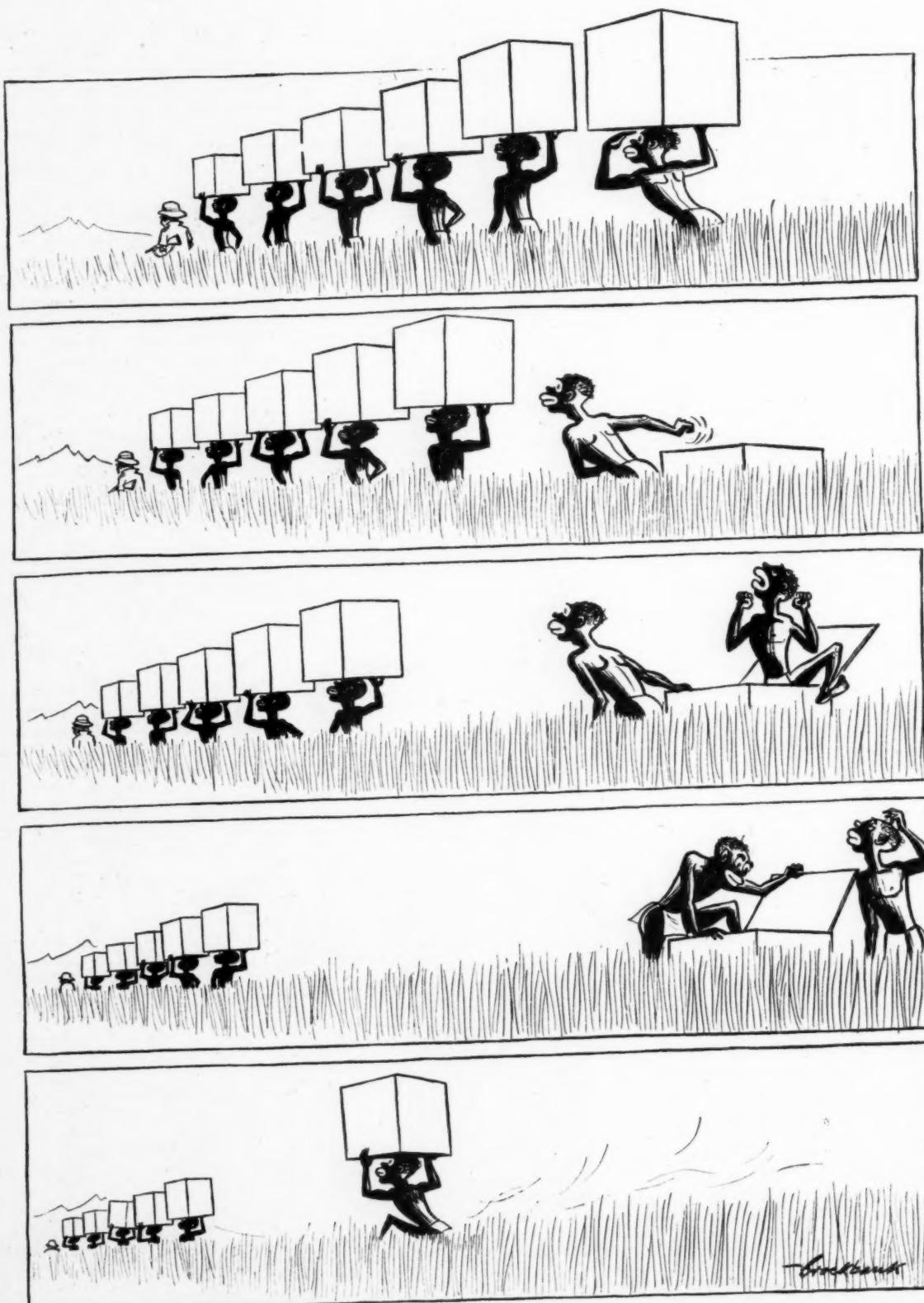
Thursday was a strange day in House of Commons history. The order of the day was the National Insurance Bill and this was an important enough bill introduced in an excellent speech by Mr. Boyd-Carpenter. But Members' minds were elsewhere. The debate, for all the attention that was paid to it, might as well have been held in Chinese. Members were wondering if there would much longer be any nation to insure, and the whole debate was enormously reminiscent of those speeches which one has to make at

elections in order to hold the fort until the candidate comes on from his previous meeting. People were tiptoeing into the Chamber to tell one another news of the latest gossip about the strike developments. How very incomplete a picture of Parliament is given by newspapers which only report what goes on in the Chamber! The Palace of Westminster is above all a supreme whispering gallery, and as such it perhaps performs an important function. But the one place where it is out of order to whisper—though indeed it is sometimes done—is in the Chamber. After half-past eight the boys could not take it any more and went home to dinner.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS



Archbishop Makarios and Mr. Lennox-Boyd





Ump teen Years of Progress

NOTHING is more natural than that a respectable and successful business should wish to record the passing of major milestones in its career by the publication of an official history. There are more "old firms" in Britain than in any other country, but surprisingly few of them can look back across a hundred years of development, and only a handful (Wedgwood, Holman and so on) are within hailing distance of bicentenary celebrations. Company archives are the raw material of social and economic history, and it is important that businesses with an interesting past, deliberate decades or crowded hours, should put their stories on paper.

As a regular browser in this field of literature I have learned to distinguish quite smartly between worthwhile, objective histories and worthless puffy essays in self-aggrandisement. The latter are glossy with extreme unction: the pioneers are revealed as men of incredible virtue and indefatigable industry who set out, without any thought of profit or honour, to provide employment, improve the rateable value of Coketown, strengthen the muscles of Young England and prove that model employers are born and not made.

There are pictures, reproductions of indescribable oils, showing Ebenezer and Jethro at the height of their power. They look like desiccated miniatures of W. G. Grace, and it is clear from their purposeful brows that butter wouldn't melt in their mouths. There are pictures of the old works in Foundry Lane and an architect's sketch in Vista-Vision of a corner of the proposed canteen. Eight workers have been with the firm for twenty-five years, and also are depicted, though their faces are obscured by presentation clocks in large cartons boldly labelled "Jethel Metals (1927) Ltd." There is also a photograph of four buses, with the caption "Works Outing, 1952."

Then there are the useful, informative histories. They are compiled by competent writers—journalists, authors,

historians—and their format is commensurate with their substance. They can be immensely interesting.

Take for example, Mr. E. R. Lewis's *No C.I.C.*, a recently issued history of Decca. This is an unvarnished account of the company's (and the gramophone record business's) early struggles, of speculative expansion, financial wizardry and spectacular success. Since 1946 Decca's turnover and profits have multiplied by fourteen, exports by forty, and the turntables are spinning more merrily than ever. Mr. Lewis, who in April will succeed Sir Cyril Entwistle as chairman of the company, has a first-class tale to tell, and he tells it with gusto. There are no pictures—no, not even a photograph of the annual staff dinner.

The author, incidentally, mentions that "nobody to-day seems to know the origin of the word Decca." And I,

in my innocence, had always supposed that the company made its name, literally and figuratively, with ten-inch discs.

Inflation footnote. Thomas De La Rue have invented and are marketing a new paper currency counting machine. When in top gear it can get through a hundred notes in seven seconds, which seems an improvement on the performance of even the most fly-fingered cashiers of the "Big Five." As I see it this machine will knock hell out of the rubber-band, sponge-pad and thimble industries. A small, economy-size, note-counter will probably—I shouldn't wonder—be made available to the general public before long. It will be powered quite simply by a short length of hose connected to the tap over the kitchen sink. And it will enable the busy housewife to pay her revised rent in double-quick time.

MAMMON



Tim'r'ous Beasties Doing Well

FIYE years ago I took my children from Exeter to London by train. To keep them amused I told them I would give them a farthing for every rabbit they saw from the carriage window. It proved a very expensive journey.

Remembering their windfall of pocket-money they asked if I would agree to play the same game with them last week when we travelled on the identical route. I consented, and confidently raised the stakes to 10s. per rabbit spotted. The children kept their eyes glued to the glass—so did I too. I dare say many traits can be inherited and it would have been insufferable to have been cheated by my own brood. But by Salisbury the score was nil, and their disappointment most articulate. As a consolation I offered 5s. per hare: one was spotted, not surprisingly on the chalk near Andover.

Myxomatosis did a good job. The scare that the rabbit is returning is a little premature. Few of the rodents can be seen on good farm land, though it is clear that heavy litters are being

found this spring on such places as Exmoor and parts of Wales. Nature is doing its horrid best to readjust the balance by doubling the rabbits' fertility. Several farmers have reported finding litters of nine, whereas a rabbit normally has only four or five.

The loss of the pestilential bunny has had some strange effects besides the important one of making many cliff-farms quite profitable. Foxes have increased in number though they were supposed to depend on rabbits for feeding. They found an alternative diet of roots, an occasional cat, and frogs and birds. Buzzards have been seen flying off with young piglets. But perhaps the strangest consequence has been the effect on field-mice. Any naturalist would have foretold that their numbers would decrease when predatory birds such as buzzards and hawks, which used to feed on young rabbits, had to turn to the mice as a substitute. And almost certainly these birds have been feeding in this way. Nevertheless the whole country is now suffering from a plague of field-mice. I should hazard that their number has increased by at least 300 per cent during the last two years. The only explanation for this seems to be that now that the rabbits aren't there to crop the grass the field-mouse's nest in the field remains better camouflaged and less disturbed by the birds.

Several cookery books carry a recipe for edible mice. But that's another ingredient that Mrs. Beeton omitted to catch first.

RONALD DUNCAN



BOOKING OFFICE

"a way a lone"

James Joyce's World. Patricia Hutchins.
Methuen, 30/-

IN discussing James Joyce (1882–1941) it is perhaps as well to define first one's own view of him. I think he was a very good writer, but not a writer in the top class of all. He is too obsessed with technique and his own private problems. When you get beneath the guard of his obscurity there is a good deal of sentimentality and self-pity. He is not classical enough for my taste. There is something about him of the bad-tempered person who exclaims: "Very well, as you will not do as I want, do exactly as I don't want!" In the end one wishes to hear of other things than sexual and digestive processes, what it feels like to be a lapsed Catholic, and Dublin's underworld in 1904. To "teach" Joyce, as they do in the universities of America, seems to me as inappropriate as to base instruction in painting on, say, Hieronymus Bosch or William Blake.

Having said that, let us turn to Joyce's merits. *Dubliners* are good slice-of-life stories in the Gissing manner, looked upon as remarkably outspoken in their time. *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* has some claim to be considered the best of the hard-luck stories of school life; a few years ago—and no doubt to the present moment—the Hell Fire sermon described there was still being preached in all its exuberance.

His *chef d'œuvre* is, of course, *Ulysses*—for *Finnegans Wake* I can regard as no more than an interesting oddity—and through *Ulysses* walks by far his most brilliant creation, the Dublin Jew, Bloom. In *Ulysses* the whole of Joyce is to be found. There is both poetry and humour there of its own kind. By writing it he did an enormous service to literature, because his prim, priest-trained mind carried his method to logical conclusions, so that a book of that sort need never be written again. On the other hand, it had to be written once.

Joyce was always "in revolt": in

revolt against the Roman Catholic Church: in revolt against literary puritanism: in revolt against the style of writing in vogue when he was a young man. This state of mind denied him objectivity—if indeed he desired such a thing—and as a result, each subject is, as it were, measured up to Catholic doctrine in reverse, no aspect of excretion is omitted, every phrase is presented in some variation of normal

Trieste, and Zurich—in the greatest discomfort, and also in considerable poverty; although one of the paradoxes of this last aspect of his career was that he was by no means without patrons—notably Miss Harriet Weaver—who behaved with great generosity towards him. He died only sixteen years ago, so that some discretion has been exercised in the naming of figures. It would be interesting to know the actual sums contributed by admirers and realized by sale of his books.

Occasionally a trifle recondite in her own style, Miss Hutchins has done her job extraordinarily well, with tact and charm, and complete lack of egotism: something of a feat in view of the fact that she visited all these places personally and conversed with neighbours and concierges who might have something to say of Joyce and his way of life. The picture that results is a rather painful one. Bad eyesight and a touch of inherited alcoholism did not make his life, governed by an almost complete self-absorption, any easier.

The rage that he invoked—and no doubt still invokes—among some fellow-writers, and others, is odd; and a tribute to the strength of his own undoubtedly mighty will power. Obviously his books are not intended for schoolroom reading; many important books are not. If it bores you to read about Bloom in the lavatory, or Mrs. Bloom contemplating her love-life—and it is absolutely reasonable that many people should find these matters not only inordinately boring but also unduly extended in narration—do not read the book. What is inexplicable is the frenzy of moral indignation on the subject in which some have indulged. Miss Hutchins' book includes a short talk with Dr. Jung about the psycho-analytical aspect of Joyce and his work.

ANTHONY POWELL

Struggle for Power

The Mandarins. Simone de Beauvoir.
Collins, 18/-

In France, being an intellectual is a whole-time job, and Mme. de Beauvoir's characters move in a world where politics



prose. His hero was Ibsen, but he rarely if ever conquers his own innate romanticism in achieving the stark, everyday naturalism of the Ibsen approach.

All this is rather a long introduction to Miss Patricia Hutchins' enjoyable book, which is something that is neither a biography nor a commentary. She assumes that the reader already knows a certain amount about Joyce, and does a kind of tour from address to address, beginning at the writer's birth and ending at his death. The result is of great interest. Joyce's story is a very strange one, and, since his work is essentially inward-looking, it is important, if he is to be understood, to know some of the detail of his own life.

He lived, on the whole—in Paris,

and culture, literature and journalism, are inextricably linked. Novelists and dramatists compete tirelessly for power, editing influential reviews and newspapers, speaking on public platforms, producing pamphlets, in the intervals of conducting highly-charged personal relationships with colleagues, rivals, and various partners of the opposite sex. The left-wing protagonists' principal problem may be summed up in the phrase "As long as we can go along with the communists without actually becoming communists, well and good"; yet Henri Perron antagonizes Dubreuilh, his friend and mentor, by printing the truth about the Soviet penitentiary system, though he later betrays his integrity by shielding a traitor in order to protect his collaborationist film-starlet mistress. Consistently dramatic and absorbing despite its enormous length, rapid and fluent in style, this novel's intense seriousness and sincerity—combined with the importance of the subject matter—make it a most distinguished work of fiction.

J. M.R.

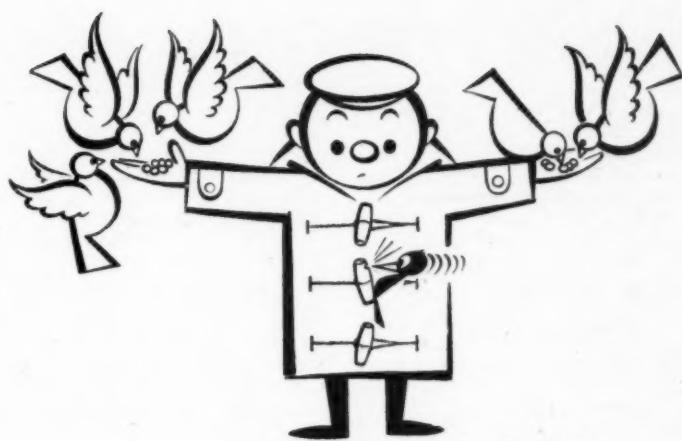
Three Plays by Ugo Betti. Translated and with a Foreword by Henry Reed. *Gollancz*, 18/-

In 1955 there was a burst of Betti in London's theatres. It was the first we had heard of him, and he had already been dead two years. These three plays were produced in three successive months. *Summertime* is the intruder, a romantic love-tale of wistful charm which, according to Mr. Reed's theory, was written to please the groundlings. The author's work is more characteristically represented by the other two (though he wrote eleven more on similar themes during the twelve years before his death). Both *The Queen and the Rebels* and *The Burnt Flooberbed* deal with the clash of unnamed political elements in unnamed countries, and provide material for Betti's clear-sighted and compassionate reflections on what a mess the world is in and why. They read as movingly as they play, and have the advantage over most "intellectual" plays that their creator is also a dramatist of immense skill, not merely a philosopher-propagandist relying on actors to supply the missing dimension.

J. B. B.

The Defence of the United Kingdom. Basil Collier. *H.M.S.O.*, 50/-

Mr. Basil Collier, in this official history of home defence from 1918 to the end of the last war, rightly lays stress on the use of radar. He tells how the inter-service committee dealing, among other things, with priorities for research, development and production, broadly settled on the policy of top priority for the long-range detection and location of aircraft. If they had not done so "it is as certain as such hypotheses can ever be that the Battle of Britain and perhaps the whole war would have been lost."



ROY DAVIS

By access to both British and German official records the author considers in detail the flying bomb and the long range rocket. It is always difficult to strike an interesting and readable approach when compiling such a tome as this, and Mr. Collier must be given credit for his elucidation.

A. V.

A Love Affair. Emile Zola. Translated by Jean Stewart. *Elek*, 16/-

Doctor Pascal. Emile Zola. Translated by Vladimir Kean. *Elek*, 18/-

Elek Books, bless them, are now engaged on translating Zola. *A Love Affair* is a very well-made melodrama. A sick child wrecks her widowed mother's love affair with a doctor neighbour at the cost of her own life. Zola rather heavily insists on the background of Paris in varying weather, without ever quite bringing off an Egdon Heath, and the social satire centred on the doctor's friendly, flighty wife is heavy going; but the characters and the action are dashed off vividly and sturdily, and if the story seems less pathetic than it did to Zola, though equally horrible, that is a reflection on us rather than on him. At any rate, it is consistently interesting.

Dr. Pascal, the last of the Rougon-Macquart series, Zola's study of a Jukes family from the right side of the tracks, is full of chunks of amateur genetics and sparring between Science and Religion, with a referee who has backed Science. The heroine, though irresistible to her uncle, is nearly as undesirable as the account of her troubles is unreadable.

R. G. G. P.

Ireland in Colour. W. R. Rodgers. *Batsford*, 18/-

One opens this volume, with its forty colour plates, wondering why on earth anyone—let alone Batsford—should bring out yet another book on the Ould Sod. The Dublin Quays, Glendalough and all the other camera-happy favourites are on show again, and of course the

mountains of Mourne that sweep down to the sea. At the same time, some out-of-the-way places such as Ardglass, an attractive fishing village in Co. Down, are included. While certain illustrations do convey the climate in its varying light, little attention is given to that detail, human and architectural, which really suggests a country.

Mr. Rodgers writes an introductory essay—and a note about each plate—with unflagging and alliterative zest. Tourists, please skip. When he looks hard at a place or a thing he can make it live in an unusual yet exact phrase; he speaks, for instance, of "an Ulster garden in June suddenly sugared in hailstones." For a Belfastman he really has made an effort to understand the Southern Irish.

R. G.

Life of Rossini. Stendhal. Translated by Richard N. Coe. *Calder*, 30/-

It seems odd that a biography written when its subject still had forty-four years to live should continue to be a standard work. But not only was Stendhal's *Life* (here for the first time translated in full into English) written by an enthusiast with a genuine interpretative sense, but Rossini himself, already a rebel against the tastes of his day even when in the full flood of his creative genius, wrote little of importance besides *Guillaume Tell* and *Le Comte Ory* after the year of publication (1824).

As a critical appreciation the book is invaluable, even if over-romanticized and inaccurate, not least for the light it throws on the opera world of the early 19th century. Our dullest orchestral student could manage at least to find the notes of a Mozart opera, yet in 1807 an Italian orchestra found them so difficult to play that the performances were transformed "into a cacophony of positively appalling dimensions" in which only three arias and one duet "managed to swim on the surface of this sea of boiling discords," and the

comment was made that Teutonic accompaniments were more like a police escort than a guard of honour!

J. D.

The Producer and the Play. Norman Marshall. *Macdonald, 30/-*

Orderly, exhaustively well-informed and alive with a devotion to the theatre which never spills over into sentimentality, Mr. Marshall's book could heighten an intelligent playgoer's enjoyment for the rest of his life. He is modest to the point of frank disregard about his own achievements, but it is because of them that he is able to analyse and assess those of almost any producer of note from Madame Vestris of the Lyceum to Guthrie and Brook (not forgetting the French, Germans and Russians). He explodes popular misconceptions of Stanislavsky, is perhaps over-hard on Gordon Craig, has splendid anecdotes of other great men—but never for the mere anecdote's sake, like so many flabby theatre books—and traces, among other trends, the oddly rhythmic ebb and flow of fashions in "realism" and "irrealism" through the generations. He sticks closely to his brief, avoiding any breath of "show business": the photographic illustrations may have actors and actresses in them, but mostly unnamed—it would be beside the point. The lucid and unmannered writing is a pleasure to read.

J. B. B.



Hippolyte—JEAN-FRANCOIS CALVÉ

Phèdre—EDWIGE FEUILLÈRE

AT THE PLAY

Phèdre (PALACE)

WE British watch French classical acting with much the same sensations as those with which Americans watch cricket. We find it fascinating but strange. Interest is aroused, more than excitement; emotion is damped by the intricacies of a totally alien code. The code may be quickly grasped, but our reactions are not geared to it by tradition; Shakespeare has led us to expect stormier proceedings, just as a background of baseball is no help in appreciating the technical glories of a long series of maiden overs.

Even by French standards Edwige Feuillère sets her thermostat a little low for *Phèdre*. Rarely does she raise her voice. Much of Phèdre's agony comes to us in whispers, and there is a minimum of movement, for the Queen seems almost frozen in horror at the passions which possess her. The expression of her set, pale face scarcely alters; as she stands, a tortured figure, on the dais, helped there by her maid Cénone, one has the feeling that already she has taken too much punishment to be capable of any further peak of grief. And yet within this narrow compass the finest shades of Racine are clearly understood and as clearly passed on in miniature to the

audience, with an exact manipulation of the most delicate means. It is a wonderfully controlled performance, but so cool that for me it was a superb exercise that failed to move as I have been moved, for instance, by Sybil Thorndike through the freer convention of our stage.

In Maurice Cazeneuve's production Racine is nobly declaimed, even if to our ears the notes have small variety. The characters are well contrasted. Jean-François Calvè's ardent Hippolyte, Bernard Noël's dominating Thésée, Eliane Zucchini's Aricie, whose love for Hippolyte stirs Phèdre to her final jealousy, and Marguerite Coutan-Lambert's motherly Cénone, all these are admirable. The play is set with dignity by Jacques Noel against a pillared set flanked by heavy curtains, but though his dresses are equally good he is less happy with his wigs. That of Mme. Feuillère, ringed by crimped black curls, suggests a head geisha-girl rather than an Attic queen, while Thésée appears to share the same barber as Herbert Morrison.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The Diary of Anne Frank (Phoenix—5/12/56), a modern tragedy. *The Chalk Garden* (Haymarket—25/4/56), a long run deserved. *For Amusement Only* (Apollo—13/6/56), in parts a very funny revue.

ERIC KEOWN

AT THE GALLERY

George Stubbs—1724–1806

THE Stubbs exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery is drawing the town (closes April 7). This should be gratifying to the various private owners and the museums who have once again denuded their walls for a worthy object, in this case the first large-scale Stubbs exhibition held in London since 1885.

To the English-speaking world with its almost fanatical adoration of horses and horse-racing and with, frequently, a nostalgia for rural life, Stubbs has much to offer. He had, however, a far more powerful brain than a purely charming animal painter need have. He might be termed the Ingres of sporting life in that he brought to the study (including dissection) of horses the same intellectual passion which the nineteenth century French master lavished on the portrayal of the human body. He had distinct limitations. His intense interest in the form of animals precluded the use of any but the most sober tints; and his backgrounds were frequently so much afterthoughts that they resemble drop-cloths—an exception to the latter being the famous "Gimcrack with a Groom Jockey and Stable-lad on Newmarket Heath." It has been suggested

that over-cleaning may account for a certain woolliness in the backgrounds compared to the crystal clarity and high finish of the animals. It would be a tragedy if this was so, but I think Stubbs' temperamental indifference to all that did not passionately interest him is more likely to provide the explanation.

* * * * *

The Lefevre Gallery usually has a fair share of whatever good nineteenth- and twentieth-century painting is on the market. Their present exhibition (closes in April) does not disappoint, and includes a small early Renoir (painted 1870) and two nudes by Bonnard, that happiest of painters, in whom, unlike Stubbs a century before, the sense of light, colour, pattern and character was each matched to perfection by the others.

* * * * *

Recommended

At the I.C.A., 17-18 Dover Street, W.1 (closes March 31). Lost Wax. Metal casting on the Guinea Coast: a number of small objects, vital, imaginative, decorative.

ADRIAN DAINTREY



AT THE PICTURES

Fortune is a Woman
Julie

TO mention wit and a light touch in connection with what is essentially an atmospheric suspense piece about crime, almost a whodunit, is probably to suggest something on the lines of that often pleasing but comparatively undistinguished form the comedy-thriller. This specification applied to *Fortune is a Woman* (Director: Sidney Gilliat) would be quite misleading; and yet it is a most absorbing suspense piece about crime, and the investigation of crime, and it is, unexpectedly and very agreeably, full of lightness, brightness and wit. I found it very enjoyable.

The story—from the novel by Winston Graham—has been criticized as “confusing”; when I say that this did not worry me I’m not necessarily saying that I followed at the time all the ramifications of the plot (though I think I did), but simply that if there were any incomprehensible moments they didn’t in the least interfere with my pleasure. I don’t think this kind of thing does interfere with the average filmgoer’s pleasure; I think those who complain about it are, most of them, hypnotizing themselves into believing it did because that strikes them as the correct, conventional reaction. When a film is as well written and made as this, with the kind of skill that keeps one watching with a sort of eager concentration even so simple a shot as that of a man opening a door, the fact that one doesn’t at the moment grasp the precise reason for his opening the door is irrelevant and doesn’t come into one’s head anyway.

The central character (Jack Hawkins) is an insurance assessor—but he might



[*Fortune is a Woman*]

Oliver Bramwell—JACK HAWKINS

Sarah Moreton—ARLENE DAHL

just as well be called a detective—and the film follows the course of his investigations into a country-house fire and claims for damage after it. It gradually emerges (the very gradualness, the step-by-step progress of his inquiry is a powerful factor in keeping us interested) that the claims are fraudulent and the fire probably, like a later one, deliberately started; and he is emotionally involved because he once knew and still loves the beautiful wife (Arlene Dahl) of the claimant (Dennis Price). This is the basis of the story—it is, admittedly, far too complicated for a full outline here; what I’m concerned to emphasize is that this is not the slightest handicap to enjoyment of the film. It is gripping, well acted (the many excellent small-part players include Bernard Miles and Greta Gynt), with passages of very strong suspense, and much intelligently amusing dialogue. Moreover the story does hold water when examined afterwards; but I’m not one of the few people who would feel guilty at having enjoyed the film even if it didn’t.

This week it’s an ill-balanced article, for the other film I choose to write about is another suspense piece, *Julie* (Director: Andrew L. Stone). There was a considerable choice: six other films were press-shown, including one directed by John Ford; but *Julie* was the one I enjoyed most, and it seems to me the most interesting to consider.

One interesting point is that the heroine of this intense melodrama is played by Doris Day, best known as a cheerful song-and-dance girl. She appears as the wife of a pathologically

jealous man (Louis Jourdan) determined to kill her and himself together; and as, after leaving him, she goes back to her job as an airline hostess, the way is clear for a big scene when the husband contrives to be in the same plane with her. The climax finds her, both pilots out of action (though one can still pant out hints and advice), at the controls of the plane, being told by the radar people on the ground what to do to bring it down safely. Here again, one reflects afterwards that it’s not exactly a believable situation; but here again, it’s well enough done to keep one intensely absorbed at the time.

There has been ribald comment about the dialogue of this, and true enough there are a number of mild cliché-phrases that seem comically inadequate to the circumstances in which they are spoken; yet as a whole the picture is a thoroughly gripping one, well made, full of good incidental detail, and worth seeing.

* * * * *

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In London the choice is wide: comedy with a moral in *La Traversée de Paris* (27/2/57), episodic character comedy in *Doctor at Large* (20/3/57), Ingrid Bergman’s return in *Anastasia* (6/3/57), visual magnificence in the Van Gogh story *Lust for Life* (20/3/57)—and the last two or three days of *War and Peace* (28/11/56).

Of the new releases, the only one reviewed here was *Giant* (16/1/57), huge family “saga” with good bits. *The Secret Place* is an uneven but interesting crime-and-suspense melodrama set in the East End.

RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR

Dirty Linen

THE neatest trick of the week, for my taste, was a mock B.B.C. Interlude signal in the programme "Peter Jones' Night Out." The dreamy descriptive music of the conventional symbol remained, but now the picture of the famous windmill was replaced by a scene showing the revolving arms of a filter-bed at a sewage farm. I laughed aloud.

It seems to me—and I hope Ian Carmichael, Sid Colin and Peter Jones, the script-writers of this pleasing programme, will agree with me—that television could do with regular treatment at the filter-beds. Even the most weary of business men must be tired by now of the diurnal displays of strip-tease, off-colour cross-talk and wretched vulgarity. Competition among the channels seems to be operating under the Law of Gresham, the bad driving out the good with insufferable insolence.

On the eve of the shipbuilding strike the B.B.C. put on an excellent "Press Conference," Frank Cousins needed very little encouragement from Francis Williams, Donald Tyerman and company, and cut loose so eloquently that he more or less hogged the programme. His exposition of the unions' case was altogether admirable. He spoke well, marshalled his thoughts with barrack-square precision and avoided more clichés than any previous occupant of the hot seat. I am not suggesting that his performance was skilful enough to disarm criticism, or that his orations would delight his followers (I doubt whether many of them are knowledgeable enough to keep pace with his nimble



FRED STREETER

PERCY THROWER

MR. MIDDLETON

[Gardening Club]

mind), but in a middle-brow battle of wits his offensive and defensive tactics were undoubtedly enterprising and, I think, successful. On this showing Mr. Cousins should go far: in his dynamic presence the viewer was constantly reminded of his distinguished predecessor at the T.G.W.U., Ernie Bevin.

Another B.B.C. venture into the stormy territory of industrial relations, a World Wide Pictures experiment called "The Film that Never Was," failed lamentably. The subject is difficult enough in all conscience, but to make a film suggesting that joint consultation is too delicate a matter to be handled by Government propaganda—so delicate that all concerned throw in the towel at the first puff of criticism—seems miserably defeatist.

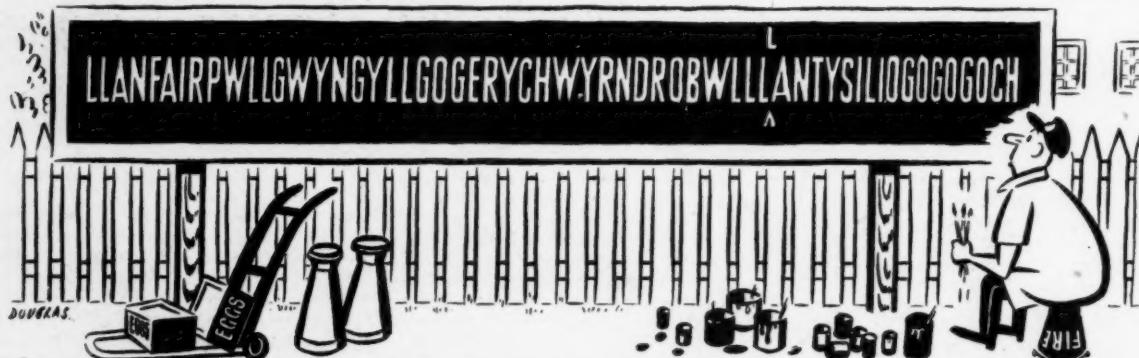
I have no idea how this film came to be made, why it was made, or how the B.B.C. was induced to screen it. I do know, however, that botched work of

this kind makes the task of serious industrial commentators infinitely harder. The film flopped not because the subject is intractable but because it was made by people without a skeletal notion of the art of documentation. The script limped from one unlikely outburst of petulance to the next, from the boss's "What the hell's happened to those bearings!" to "Get on to Maintenance and tell them to clean these windows—they're filthy," and to the original crack "It's everybody's baby." Ugh!

Gardening makes good television, and gardeners for some strange reason make excellent broadcasters. Percy Thrower, who conducts the B.B.C.'s "Gardening Club," a weekly bout with the secateurs and trowel, is a worthy successor to the memorable Mr. Middleton and Fred Streeter. He and his friends make gardening seem wonderfully easy and fascinating—even to people who, like me, regard spring as a tiresome curtain-raiser to cricket. The programme is handsomely produced by John Furness.

Bitter controversy also makes good television, but only when the subject under discussion is of reasonably wide interest and can be examined fearlessly. For this reason the ugly athletic wrangle between Jack Crump and Chris Brasher should have been ruled out of court. To see men looking daggers at each other without reason is pointless, and in this discussion, a "Sportsview" special, it was perfectly obvious that the accusations levelled were not the ones uppermost in the disputants' minds. It is not at all edifying to see people washing their dirty linen in mud. I prefer the filter-bed.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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Reg'd at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper. Entered as 2nd-class Mail Matter at the New York, N.Y., P.O. 1903. Postage of this issue: Gt. Britain and Ireland 2d. Canada 1d.* Elsewhere Overseas 2d.† Mark Wrapped top left-hand corner. *Canadian Magazine Post. †Printed Papers—Reduced Rate."

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